

## **Reaching the unreachable by radio**

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

If one tries to identify all of the people groups found even within one country, they are quickly overwhelmed by the plethora and diversity let alone the almost-impossibility of effectively reaching each of them.

Even within a modern city, one can find hidden groups not easily identifiable or reached by conventional missionary practice. Gangs, student groups, sports clubs, social elite, sports-book and call-center operators, fine arts communities, language groups, gay communities...the list is endless. The lack of personnel along with challenging logistics and safety concerns make reaching each of these groups extremely difficult.

One missionary tool that can, if used correctly, target particular groups is radio. This God-given means of outreach goes behind locked doors, through impenetrable walls and touches the hearts of those who would never meet a pastor or missionary nor step foot into a church or Bible study.

Initially, Christian (missionary) radio was broadcast from large international shortwave and medium wave (AM) transmitters, reaching into closed countries and hostile communities. Today, there remain a number of nations where this type of outreach is still crucial to reaching unreached groups.

However, broadcasting laws have changed in many parts of the world where once only government entities could put a station on the air. Today, the licensing of legal AM and FM transmitters is possible and low-cost equipment is available that can allow a local church or group of Christians to put their own, local station on the air. Thus, Christians can serve their community with news, information, entertainment and the precious message of Jesus Christ.

Now, Christians in Asia, Latin America, Africa and other regions can realize their vision of serving their own region with people speaking their own dialect or accent and addressing issues of local importance with biblical solutions set in the local cultural context. No longer must Christian depend solely on western broadcasters trying to cross cultural barriers to present the Gospel as best they can but without the insights and experiences of the local listeners.

My vision is that Christians will learn how to present radio programs that are compelling and life-changing, that present the Gospel without cultural bias or compromise and reflect the reality of the location where they are heard. This vision includes the training and development of local pastors and leaders who will learn the secrets of using radio to penetrate those barriers that often prohibit the proclamation of God's word to hungry people.

When pastors learn how to use their voices on the radio; how to adapt their messages that are prepared for all of the senses in a worship setting to just the sense of hearing via the

radio; when they learn to develop captivating, life-relevant programs with messages that communicate to the listener where he or she is about issues that are ultimately important; when they learn that radio broadcasting is much more than talking into a microphone but involves being open and responsive to feedback, then people who have closed themselves to the Gospel and rejected those who would reach them will, indeed, be able to hear the Good News and respond to Christ's love.

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